

101/13-72-6240

29 March 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing at State Department on New Analytical Approach
to Foreign Policy Determination

1. Introduction. At the invitation of John Thro, [redacted] 25X1A and I attended a briefing this date in Room 7519, New State Building. The briefing was given by Don Harris and was a report on a technique he, as a consultant, and others at State have developed to clarify thinking about how to arrive at better foreign policy choices. The briefing was a rehearsal for a formal report on the project to be given later to high State officials. About 15 to 18 State officials were present at today's briefing.

2. Background. The study project was sponsored by the Bureau of European Affairs (EUR) and participated in by individuals from INR and EUR. Its intent was twofold -- to get some substantive answers to U.S. policy questions, and to test out a new method of analyzing the likely impact of U.S. policy actions. The study concerned itself only with the European area and only in the 1974-75 time frame. It considered the likely activities of France, the UK, West Germany, and the USSR as they affected the attainment of certain U.S. policy goals.

3. Study Methodology. U.S. policy goals toward Europe were first derived from the usual profound statements of U.S. interests -- national security, economic well-being, etc. and were taken to be: strengthening of NATO, integration of West Europe, detente with the East, and improvement in economic relations with West Europe. Comparable statements of national interest and policy objectives for France, the UK, West Germany, and the USSR were contributed by INR and EUR study members. These objectives were then networked by the group into a number of sub-objectives which were further conceptualized into concrete policy actions. Area experts were then asked to go down the list of objectives, sub-objectives and policy actions for each country and for each of these three categories assign a number according to the perceived importance to each country of the objective, sub-objective, and policy action in each category so that the total equaled 100. A matrix was then developed to indicate how these policy actions would impact positively or negatively on the four U.S. policy objectives indicated above.

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4. Conclusions. Ultimately, and after studying hundreds, if not thousands, of interactions, the study group came out with the following conclusions:

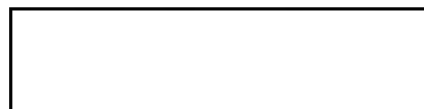
" U.S. Policy Objectives

	European Defense	Detente	European Integration	Economic Improvement	Total
UK	38	15	19	-1	71
FRG	18	21	33	6	78
France	- 4	11	-11	-5	- 9
USSR	9	19	0	0	28
Total	61	66	41	0	168 "

at which point there was animation in the hall. Did this really mean that the USSR was apt to contribute more toward the attainment of U.S. objectives in Europe than, say, France? The answer was yes because, for example, the USSR would continue to support the Warsaw Pact which would cause the West European nations to give more support to NATO than they would otherwise, and this would contribute to European defense, a prime U.S. policy objective. After a moment of contemplation, there was an ardent attack on specific numbers and on numbers per se, and vigorous counterattack. "Well, after all, they are the numbers your people assigned." More animation. Attacks on statements of objectives, sub-objectives and policy actions were followed by essentially the same answer. In time, the briefer translated the conclusions into words having the following portent:

- a. There would be no real change in the objectives of France, the UK and West Germany in 1974-75;
- b. There would be no relative change in the NATO-Warsaw Pact balance;
- c. The USSR will continue to seek the weakening of U.S. influence in Europe; and
- d. France's policies will come out to be negative, on balance, for U.S. interests.

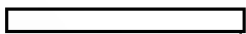

5. Personal Observations. While there was considerable resistance to the idea that concepts such as policy objectives, sub-objectives and policy actions could be given relative values, there did seem to be a belief on the part of many of the attendees that the methodology could help sharpen up thinking about foreign policy formulation. I would tend to agree, but the gap between the mathematicians and the poets; quantifiers and verbalizers; systems analysts and policy makers; is so great that I doubt the method will make much progress in State. As for its use in intelligence, I believe it would be possible to adapt it to the development of objectives and priorities, but several iterations would be necessary before one could see whether it would result in a real improvement over the way we derive them now. It might also be used in the estimative process, but it would take a lot of convincing before it could be given a serious try.



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